

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the present application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) An absorbent article (40) configured for disposition within a vestibule (42) of a female wearer, the absorbent article comprising a fluid permeable cover, a baffle, and an absorbent (66) secured to the cover ~~and situated between the cover and baffle~~, the absorbent having a principal longitudinal axis, a principal transverse axis, a thickness along a vertical z-axis direction, first (80) and second (82) spaced apart longitudinal sides, first (76) and second (78) spaced apart transverse end areas, the longitudinal sides together with the transverse end areas generally forming a periphery of the absorbent, and at least one notch (100) situated in at least one transverse end area; wherein

the absorbent is situated vertically along the z-axis between the cover and baffle;

the absorbent has a transverse minimum width of no less than about 20 mm, and a z-axis thickness of no greater than about 10 mm;

the at least one notch extends entirely through ~~an entire~~ the z-axis thickness of the absorbent,

extends inward from the periphery of the absorbent to a depth of no less than about 3 mm,

and has a width ~~of no less than about 10 mm~~ at the periphery of the absorbent; and

the depth and width of the at least one notch are sufficient to allow the absorbent article to maintain a substantially spaced relationship from a female wearer's clitoris, when the absorbent article is disposed within the vestibule with the notch in a transverse end area that is closest the clitoris.

2. (currently amended) The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the notch ~~has a width of no less than about 15 mm~~ is situated on the principal longitudinal axis.

3. (previously amended) The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the notch extends inward from the periphery of the absorbent to a depth of no less than about 10 mm.

4. (previously amended) The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the notch has a depth (102) no greater than about 30 mm; and wherein the notch has a width (104) no greater than about 30 mm

Claims 5 and 6. (canceled)

7. (previously amended) The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the cover encloses the absorbent.

8. (previously amended) The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the baffle (64) is liquid impermeable.

9. (canceled)

10. (currently amended) The absorbent article of claim 1, further comprising at least one other notch situated in at least one longitudinal side of the absorbent, and situated on the principal transverse axis.

11. (original) The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the absorbent further comprises a superabsorbent polymer.

12. (currently amended) An absorbent article (40) configured for disposition within a vestibule (42) of a female wearer, the absorbent article comprising a fluid permeable cover, a baffle, and an absorbent (66) secured to the cover ~~and situated between the cover and baffle~~, the absorbent having a principal longitudinal axis, a principal transverse axis, a thickness along a vertical z-axis direction, first (80) and second (82) spaced apart longitudinal sides, first (76) and second (78) spaced apart transverse end areas, the longitudinal sides together with the transverse end areas generally forming the periphery of the absorbent, and at least one notch (100) situated in the periphery of the absorbent; wherein the absorbent is situated vertically along the z-axis between the cover and baffle; the absorbent has a transverse minimum width of no less than about 20 mm, and a z-axis thickness of no greater than about 10 mm;

the at least one notch is situated in at least one transverse end area, extends entirely through an ~~entire~~ the z-axis thickness of the absorbent, extends inward from the periphery of the absorbent to a depth of no less than about 5 mm, and has a width ~~of no less than about 40 mm~~ at the periphery of the absorbent; and

the depth and width of the at least one notch are sufficient to allow the absorbent article to maintain a substantially spaced relationship from a female wearer's perineum, when the absorbent article is disposed within the vestibule with the notch in a transverse end area that is closest to the perineum.

13. (currently amended) The absorbent article of claim 12, wherein the notch ~~has a width of no less than about 15 mm~~ is situated on the principal longitudinal axis.

14. (previously amended) The absorbent article of claim 12, wherein the notch extends inward from the periphery of the absorbent to a depth of no less than about 10 mm.

15. (previously amended) The absorbent article of claim 12, wherein the notch has a depth (102) no greater than about 30 mm; and wherein the notch has a width (104) no greater than about 30 mm.

Claims 16 and 17. (canceled)

18. (previously amended) The absorbent article of claim 12, wherein the cover encloses the absorbent.

19. (previously amended) The absorbent article of claim 12, wherein the baffle (64) is liquid impermeable.

Claims 20 through 22. (canceled)

23. (original) The absorbent article of claim 12, wherein the absorbent further comprises a superabsorbent polymer.

24. (previously amended) An absorbent article (40) configured for disposition within a vestibule (42) of a female wearer, the absorbent article comprising a fluid permeable cover, a baffle, and an absorbent (66) secured to the cover and situated between the cover and baffle, the absorbent having a principal longitudinal axis, a principal transverse axis, a thickness along a vertical z-axis direction, first (80) and second (82) spaced apart longitudinal sides, first (76) and second (78) spaced apart transverse end areas, the longitudinal sides together with the transverse end areas generally forming the periphery of the absorbent article, and at least one notch (100) situated in at least one longitudinal side; wherein the absorbent is situated vertically along the z-axis between the cover and baffle; the absorbent has a transverse minimum width of no less than about 20 mm, and a z-axis thickness of no greater than about 10 mm;

the at least one notch extends entirely through ~~an entire~~ the z-axis thickness of the absorbent, extends inward from the periphery of the absorbent to a depth of no less than about 5 mm, and has a width of ~~no less than about 10 mm~~ at the periphery of the absorbent; and the depth and width of the at least one notch are sufficient to allow the absorbent article to maintain a substantially spaced relationship from a female wearer's clitoris, when the absorbent article is disposed within the vestibule with the notch in a longitudinal side that is closest to the clitoris.

25. (currently amended) The absorbent article of claim 24, wherein the notch ~~has a width of no less than about 15 mm~~ is situated on the principal longitudinal axis.

26. (previously amended) The absorbent article of claim 24, wherein the notch extends inward from the periphery of the absorbent to a depth of no less than about 10 mm.

27. (previously amended) The absorbent article of claim 24, wherein the notch has a depth (102) no greater than about 30 mm; and wherein the notch has a width (104) no greater than about 30 mm.

Claims 28 and 29. (canceled)

30. (previously amended) The absorbent article of claim 24, wherein the cover encloses the absorbent.

31. (previously amended) The absorbent article of claim 24, wherein the baffle (64) is liquid impermeable.

32. (canceled)

33. (currently amended) The absorbent article of claim 24, further comprising at least one other notch situated in at least one transverse end area, and situated on the principal transverse axis.

34. (original) The absorbent article of claim 24, wherein the absorbent further comprises a superabsorbent polymer.